

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
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R 061513Z MAY 77
FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3881
INFO SECDEF WASHDC

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 ADDIS ABABA 2868

EXDIS

MILITARY TREAT AS SPECAT

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, MASS, ET, US
SUBJ: THE FUTURE COURSE OF US-ETHIOPIAN RELATIONS

1. IN TAKING STOCK OF US POSITION VIS-A-VIS ETHIOPIA IN
WAKE OF CLOSURE OF ALL USG GOVT INSTALLATIONS HERE
WITH EXCEPTION OF EMBASSY ITSELF AND USAID, I AM PROCEEDING
ON CONVICTION THAT FOUR PRINCIPAL INTERESTS WHICH HAVE
DICTATED OUR PAST POSTURE AND ACTIONS IN ETHIOPIA CONTINUE
TO BE VALID, EVEN THOUGH OUR ABILITY TO PURSUE THOSE INTER-
ESTS MAY HAVE BEEN RADICALLY RESTRICTED BY CHANGED SITUATION
IN WHICH WE FIND OURSELVES. THOSE INTERESTS, AS I SEE THEM
ARE AS FOLLOWS:

A) STRATEGIC VALUE OF HORN OF AFRICA

B) DESIRE TO PRESERVE MAXIMUM POSSIBLE POLITICAL
STABILITY IN AREA

C) PROVIDING ETHIOPIA WITH CREDIBLE ALTERNATIVE
TO COMPLETE UNILATERAL DEPENDENCE ON SOVIET
UNION AND ITS ALLIES

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D) LONG-TERM MODERNIZATION OF ETHIOPIA'S SOCIAL
STRUCTURE, EDUCATION, AGRICULTURE, AND HEALTH
SERVICES WITH VIEW TO ENCOURAGING RESPONSIBLE
AND MODERATE POLICIES

2. STRATEGIC VALUE: WE NOTE STATEMENT PARA 5 STATE

92304 THAT "ETHIOPIA HAS LOST ITS STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE TO US." NEVERTHELESS, CURRENT EXACERBATION OF RELATIONS AMONG ALL COUNTRIES IN HORN REGION, GROWING ROLE OF SOVIET UNION IN ETHIOPIAN AFFAIRS, DETERIORATING MILITARY SITUATION IN ERITREA, CHANGING ACTIVITIES IN SOMALIA, AND IMMINENT DJIBOUTI INDEPENDENCE ALL TEND TO EMPHASIZE THAT STRATEGIC CONSIDERATIONS CANNOT BE LEFT OUT OF ANY APPRAISAL OF FUTURE ACTIONS IN THIS IMPORTANT GEOGRAPHIC REGION OF WORLD.

3. PRESERVATION OF STABILITY: THIS INTEREST HAS GROWN INCREASINGLY PRESSING AS ETHIOPIA HAS DEVELOPED INTO MAJOR SOURCE OF INSTABILITY, AND AS OUR MEANS WITHIN ETHIOPIA FOR PROMOTING STABILITY HAVE DECREASED ALMOST TO VANISHING POINT. WE MUST RECOGNIZE THAT UNLESS SOME DEGREE OF STABILITY IS PRESERVED IN HORN REGION, US RUNS SERIOUS RISK OF BEING DRAWN IN ON ONE SIDE OR OTHER. ACCORDINGLY, OUR PRESENT ROLE IS LESS WITH ETHIOPIA ITSELF THAN WITH OTHER STATES IN AREA TO EXTENT WE CAN DISSUADE THEM FROM AGGRESSIVE ACTIONS, TENDING FURTHER TO AGGRAVATE EXISTING INSTABILITY.

4. ALTERNATIVE TO UNILATERAL DEPENDENCE: OUR INTEREST IN PROVIDING SUCH AN ALTERNATIVE IS PERHAPS STRONGER THAN EVER, ALTHOUGH WE ARE UNDER NO ILLUSIONS OF BEING ABLE TO DO MUCH IN SHORT-RUN TOWARDS PURSUING THIS OBJECTIVE. I AM CONVINCED THAT IT IS IN OUR LONG-TERM INTEREST TO STAY IN THIS COUNTRY IN SOME FORM, DESPITE SPEED WITH WHICH ETHIOPIANS MOVING AT PRESENT
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TO MINIMIZE OUR PRESENCE AND TO ACCEPT SOVIET TUTELAGE IN MOST SIGNIFICANT FIELDS. FOR US TO DO SO, WE MUST AS MINIMUM CONTINUE TO DEMONSTRATE THAT WE HAVE AN APPRECIATION OF VITAL ETHIOPIAN NATIONAL INTERESTS IN ERITREA, DJIBOUTI AND OGADEN. WE MUST ALSO TRY TO RETAIN ACTIVITIES IN ETHIOPIA THAT PROVIDE SOME DEGREE OF BILATERAL INTERPLAY IN ANTICIPATION THAT ONE DAY EPMG-SOVIET RELATIONS MAY COOL, SHOULD SOVIETS NOT FULFILL COMPLETELY ROLE THAT EPMG OBVIOUSLY EXPECTS THEM TO FILL.

5. ETHIOPIAN MODERNIZATION: ALTHOUGH RECENT EVENTS MAY LIKEWISE MAKE IT MORE DIFFICULT FOR US TO IMPLEMENT PRODUCTIVE ACTIONS IN MODERNIZATION FIELD AND HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES CONTINUE TO BE PROBLEM, I BELIEVE THIS IS ONE AREA WHERE POSSIBILITIES FOR US TO CONTINUE TO PLAY BENEVOLENT ROLE SERVING OUR BROADER INTERESTS IN AREA, AND THEREBY GAINING SOME DEGREE OF CREDIT FOR OURSELVES, CONTINUE TO EXIST.

COURSES OF ACTION

6. ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE: TAKING LAST OF THESE INTERESTS FIRST, I AM CONVINCED THAT NOTHING THAT HAS HAPPENED DURING PAST TWO WEEKS SHOULD CAUSE US APPRECIABLY TO CHANGE OUR DESIRE TO PURSUE ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS IN ETHIOPIA AT ABOUT PRESENT FUNDING LEVEL. ALTHOUGH WE CANNOT PREDICT WITH CERTAINTY THAT EPMG WILL CONTINUE TO BE RECEPTIVE TO OUR ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE INITIATIVES, FACT USAID REMAINS INTACT WHEN ALL OTHER AGENCIES HAVE GONE IS GOOD INDICATION. ETHIOPIANS ARE NOT LIKELY TO BUY OTHER THAN LOW PROFILE PROJECTS IN SUCH FIELDS AS EXTENSION SERVICES, RESETTLEMENT, RURAL ROADS, AND DROUGHT RELIEF, AND BOTH TRAINING AND USE TO ANY SIGNIFICANT DEGREE OF RESIDENT FOREIGN ADVISORS MAY HAVE TO GO BY BOARDS. BY SEPTTEL, EMBASSY
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HAS SUBMITTED PROPOSALS FORESEEING MAJOR REDUCTION OF AID PERSONNEL AS WELL, BUT WE BELIEVE THAT CURRENT PROGRAM ITSELF IS SOUND, CONTINUES TO MAKE SENSE IN CURRENT POLITICAL CLIMATE, AND PROVIDES ONGOING MEANS OF PURSUING OUR INTERESTS OUTLINED ABOVE.

7. RESIDUAL DUSIS OPERATIONS: WITH USIS NO LONGER OPERATING IN ETHIOPIA, MANY OF TRADITIONAL ACTIVITIES IN PRESS AND CULTURAL FIELD WILL FALL BY WAYSIDE. EMBASSY WILL MAKE EVERY EFFORT, HOWEVER, TO CONTINUE IVP EXCHANGE ACTIVITIES, UNLESS EPMG MAKES THEM IMPOSSIBLE, AND WILL ESTABLISH SUCH CONTACTS WITH MEDIA AND EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS AS WILL ENABLE US TO KEEP ABREAST OF OFFICIAL NEWS AS IT BREAKS AND TO KEEP OPINION MAKERS AWARE OF SIGNIFICANT POSITIONS, STATEMENTS, AND ACTIONS OF OUR OWN GOVERNMENT. EMBASSY WILL WELCOME FURTHER SUGGESTIONS FROM WASHINGTON.

8. MILITARY ASSISTANCE: BY ITS NOTE OF APRIL 30 (ADDIS ABABA 2708), EPMG HAS FORMALLY TERMINATED TWO BILATERAL AGREEMENTS ON WHICH OUR BILATERAL SECURITY ASSISTANCE RELATIONSHIP WAS BASED. OBVIOUS TEMPTATION IS TO CONCLUDE THAT BY ITS ACTION, EPMG HAS MADE CLEAR THAT IT NO LONGER LOOKS TO US FOR ASSISTANCE OF ANY KIND IN THIS FIELD. WHILE BY AND LARGE THIS IS PROBABLY TRUE, I DOUBT WHETHER ETHIOPIANS HAVE THOUGHT THROUGH ALL IMPLICATIONS OF THEIR ACTION. ON OUR SIDE THERE IS NO DOUBT IN MY MIND THAT IF WE CHOOSE TO INTERPRET TERMINATION OF AGREEMENTS AS AN END TO EVERY ASPECT OF MILITARY RELATIONSHIP, WE SHALL HAVE NO

VOICE AT ALL IN ETHIOPIAN AFFAIRS IN FOREESEEABLE FUTURE,
EVEN ASSUMING THAT EPMG CHOOSES NOT TO BREAK RELATIONS,
WHICH IS BY NO MEANS CERTAIN.

9. IN EMBASSY VIEW, US SHOULD CEASE PROVIDING EPMG

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WITH MAJOR WEAPONS SYSTEMS EVEN AT RISK OF BEING
CHARGED WITH BAD FAITH. THIS WOULD INCLUDE ALL F-5E
AIRCRAFT AND M-60 TANKS IN PIPELINE. WE SHOULD ALSO
STOP ALL DELIVERIES OF LETHAL WEAPONS, SUCH AS M-14
CARBINES, TOW MISSILES, HOWITZERS, ETC., AS WELL AS
ARMAMENT FOR NAVY PATROL BOATS. AS FOR REMAINING THREE
PATROL BOATS, WHICH WERE SCHEDULED FOR DELIVERY SHORTLY
AND WHICH EPMG HAS ALREADY PAID FOR ON STRICT COMMER-
CIAL BASIS, I WOULD FAVOR INDICATING OUR WILLINGNESS
TO AUTHORIZE DELIVERY AS SCHEDULED, SHOULD EPMG DESIRE.
I WOULD HAVE NO PROBLEM WITH CONTINUED SHIPMENT OF NON-
LETHAL MILITARY EQUIPMENT PRESENTLY IN PIPELINE.

10. SINCE MUTUAL DEFENSE ASSISTANCE AGREEMENT HAS BEEN
TERMINATED, ALL MILITARY TRAINING CONNECTED THEREWITH
SHOULD NATURALLY CEASE AS WELL. IN EMBASSY VIEW, HOW-
EVER, THOSE ETHIOPIAN TRAINEES ALREADY IN USE SHOULD BE
ALLOWED TO COMPLETE THEIR TRAINING PROGRAMS, SO LONG AS
EPMG DOES NOT PRESS FOR THEIR RETURN EARLIER. IF
ETHIOPIANS ARE INTERESTED IN FUTURE TRAINING ON CASH
PAYMENT BASIS, WE BELIEVE IT IS UP TO THEM TO TAKE
INITIATIVE IN RAISING REQUEST.

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
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FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3882
INFO SECDEF WASHDC

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EXDIS

MILITARY TREAT AS SPECAT

11. RATHER THAN FLATLY TO CUT OFF AT ONCE SUPPLY OF SPARE PARTS FOR LETHAL WEAPONS, I BELIEVE THAT OUR INTERESTS CAN BEST BE SERVED BY SAYING NOTHING, SIMPLY HOLDING UP SHIPMENTS, AND PLACING OUR DECISION ON THIS CATEGORY IN LIMBO FOR SIX MONTHS OR WHATEVER PERIOD WE CONSIDER USEFUL. BY DOING SO, WE WOULD HAVE LOST NOTHING, SINCE ALL ETHIOPIANS COULD DO IS RAIL AT US, WHICH IS NOTHING NEW, WHEREAS, IT JUST MIGHT SMOKE OUT SOME SMALL ELEMENT OF POSITIVE MOVEMENT IN OUR RELATIONS THAT IS NOT APPRENT NOW. DELIVERY OF SPARE PARTS FOR NON-LETHAL ITEMS COULD MEANWHILE CONTINUE.

12. THAT LEAVES ONLY QUESTION OF CONTRACTORS FROM PRIVATE COMPANIES WORKING ON INSTALLATION OF EQUIPMENT ALREADY DELIVERED TO ETHIOPIA. ALL CONTRACTORS IN COUNTRY LAST MONTH LEFT ETHIOPIA TOGETHER WITH EXPELLED OFFICIAL PERSONNEL. AS DEPT KNOWS, EPMG IS AWARE THEY HAVE GONE AND THUS FAR HAS NOT RAISED SUBJECT WITH US. CONTRACTORS FROM NORTHRUP HAVE REQUESTED SHIPMENT TO US OF THEIR HOUSEHOLD EFFECTS AND APPARENTLY HAVE NO INTENTION TO RETURN. OTHERS, SUCH AS WESTINGHOUSE REPS, LEFT HOPING TO COME BACK. WE DO NOT KNOW ABOUT EMERSON REPS.

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APART FROM QUESTION OF CONTRACTUAL COMMITMENTS TO ETHIOPIANS, MY PRIMARY CONCERN WITH REGARD TO THESE INDIVIDUALS IS PROVIDING FOR THEIR SAFETY. WITH MAAG BACK-UP CAPABILITY GONE, I WOULD BE RELUCTANT TO ASSUME RESPONSIBILITY FOR ASSURING THEIR SECURITY IN REMOTE AREAS SUCH AS JIJIGA, WHERE TWO WESTINGHOUSE REPS HAD TO BE AVACUATED EARLIER THIS YEAR AFTER NEAR-FATAL INCIDENT. IN ADDITION, THERE EXISTS DISTINCT POSSIBILITY THAT, IF CONTRACTORS WERE TO RETURN AND TECHNICAL DIFFICULTIES WERE THEN TO DEVELOP ON ONE OR ANOTHER OF PROUECTS, ETHIOPIAS COULD HOLD CONTRACTORS AS SEMI-HOSTAGES AS MEANS OF GUARANTEEING SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION OF INSTALLATION WORK. FOR THESE REASONS, I WOULD MUCH PREFER THAT THEY NOT COME BACK, BUT RECOGNIZE THAT COMPANIES THEMSELVES MAY HAVE THEIR OWN VIEWS THAT WILL NEED TO BE DISCUSSED WITH DEPT.

13. AS INDICATED ABOVE, ETHIOPIANS MAY OF COURSE CHOOSE NOT TO PICK UP ANY OF ABOVE MILITARY PACKAGE AND MAY PREFER COMPLETE BRAEAK IN MILITARY FIELD, IN

WHICH CASE OUR ACTION WOULD AMOUNT TO NOTHING MORE
THAN INDICATION OF GOOD FAITH. ON OTHER HAND, SHOULD
ETHIOPIANS WANT TO CONTINUE RELATINSHIP IN THIS
LIMITED FASHION, REMAINING ITEMS AS LISTED ABOVE ARE
OF NATURE THAT IN MY VIEW CAN BE JUSTIFIED BEFORE
CONGRESS AND PUBLIC. AT THIS TIME, EPMG HAS NOT
RAISED MATTER OF FUTURE MILITARY ASSISTANCE WITH US,
AND MY GUESS IS THAT THEY ARE UNLIKELY TO TAKE
INITIATIVE. THUS, SHOULD WE CHOOSE TO MAKE AVAILABLE
SOME ITEMS TO THEM, WE SHALL PROBABLY HAVE TO TAKE
INITIATIVE OURSELVES IN OPENING SOME KIND OF DIALOGUE,
AND DEPT MAY WISH TO KEEP THIS IN MIND AS TACTICAL
MATTER.

14. THIS IS A COUNTRY TEAM MESSAGE.

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Message Attributes

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Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
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Disposition Approved on Date:
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